Course Description and Objectives
This course is designed to familiarize students with the policy process in education and issues related to policy analysis. Policy involves more than plans and resources, it involves values, multiple (often competing) objectives, and a variety of actors. The course focuses on how public “problems” in K-12 education are socially constructed and the ways in which the state and federal government have chosen to address these problems. Throughout this course we will consider the following: how policy problems are constructed; how policies are designed and implemented; what interest groups get involved in policy dialogue and how they influence the process; what factors shape policy implementation; and the role of research in policy making. Students will develop skills in public policy analysis, a type of analysis that informs both debate and action.

The course objectives are:
1) To provide students with an understanding of K-12 education policy, the policy process, policy design and formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation;
2) To familiarize students with current state and federal educational policies; and,
3) To develop the ability of students to analyze policies, including the ability to infer and derive specific policy implications.

Format
The course will be conducted in a seminar format, using readings, small group activities, and videos to guide discussion.
**Student Expectations**

1. All assignments are due when indicated. Late assignments will be penalized with lower grades. No incompletes will be granted, except in cases of serious illness or family emergency.
2. Please be sure to proofread your writing and use appropriate citations throughout your work. Write an outline, read your work out loud, get assistance if you need help with your writing. My expectation is that every paper you submit is your best possible version!

*For all assignments, you should follow APA guidelines for your references.*
*The following cites provide further APA style guidelines:*
http://umclibrary.crk.umn.edu/apa6thedition.pdf
http://www.docstyles.com/apacrib.htm

Also, I highly recommend you review the following useful website regarding how to avoid plagiarism: http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig_st_johns/index.html

Written assignments during the term receiving less than a B- may be revised and resubmitted after consultation with me.

3. If there were one right answer to policy issues, then the task of research and policymaking would be relatively simple. However, this is not the case. Policy issues involve diverse perspectives, investments, and costs. Active discussion and thoughtful disagreement are essential for all of us to learn. Respect for others’ opinions and points of view is a fundamental ground rule for this class. One aspect of respect is meeting on equal terms; thus thoughtful reading and preparation before class discussion is expected to enable you to fully contribute to every class.

4. Students must attend each class. Please notify me in advance at the above phone number should you have to miss a class. Missing class will result in a lower course grade (except in the case of serious illness or emergency).

5. I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know as soon as possible if you need any special accommodations to enable you to fully participate.

**Suggestions**

1. Conversations regarding assignments and other course matters may be initiated at any time, either during class or during individual meetings.

2. In preparing for class, students are encouraged to write notes regarding the purpose, thesis, arguments, findings, and evidence of the readings and consider how the readings relate to the course and to your own experiences or research interests. These notes will be particularly useful as you incorporate course readings into written assignments.

**Course Communication**

This course will use the Blackboard system as a source of communication and information. Please make sure that you are able to access the system as soon as possible after the first class (and contact Kristine Mager immediately at
kmager@warner.rochester.edu (273-4564) if you are having difficulty). Please check Blackboard regularly to be aware of announcements, handouts, or other course information. The Blackboard system can be accessed at: http://my.rochester.edu.

**Required Texts**

**Additional Required Readings**
Available on Blackboard.

You must also sign up for the Public Education Network weekly NewsBlast at: http://www.publiceducation.org/subscribe.asp which will help you stay abreast of current policy issues. You should review this and be prepared to discuss relevant topics during class. It is also beneficial to read other electronic and print media with an eye toward current policy issues/debates at the state and federal level. You'll find that these are in the news daily in all types of media. I recommend you sign up for the free e-newsletters at www.edweek.org to also follow these topics.

**Course Schedule**

*Note: The schedule listed below will serve as a guide for the term; however, I reserve the right to change the schedule, including readings, as needed.*

**January 23rd:**  **Understanding and Analyzing Educational Policy**

Introductions and Course Overview.

Watch in class: Jan. 2012 Board meeting Part 1

Readings: None

Additional readings:
Finnigan – State and Federal Education Policy
Spring 2012


**January 30th:** The Social Construction of Policy Problems

Readings:
DS - *Policy paradox*, Ch. 6-9

Watch in Class: Jan. 2012 Board meeting Part 2

Additional readings:

**Assignment Due in Class: Proposal- Policy Problem (1 p.). Sign up for Presentation Day.**

**February 6th:** The Social Construction of Policy Problems (cont)

Readings:
Schneider, A. and Ingram, H. (1997). *Policy design for democracy.* Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas. (Read Ch. 4 and 5, pp. 66-149)
Kumashiro, K. K. (2008). *The seduction of common sense: How the right has framed the debate on America’s schools.* New York: Teachers College Press. (Read Ch. 2 and 4, pp. 32-48; 70-85.)

Additional readings:
February 13th:  The Federal and State Role in Education

Readings:
ED – Politics . ., Ch. 2-4

Additional readings:

February 20th:  Policy Instruments: Assumptions about the “Problem”
(Presidents’ Day – Class will be held)

Readings:
DS - Policy paradox, Ch. 11-12 (pp. 265-304)

**Assignment Due: Paper 1

Additional Readings:
Majone, G. (1989) Evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process. New Haven: Yale University Press. Ch. 6 (pp. 116-144)
February 27th:  Policy Implementation, Evaluation, and Outcomes

Readings:

Additional Readings:

March 5th:  Policy Implementation, Evaluation, and Outcomes (cont.)

Readings:

Additional readings:
March 12th: Common Core Standards

Readings:
RR – *Common Core* – Appendix B, C Intro; Ch 1-4

**Assignment Due: Paper 2**

March 19th: Common Core Standards (cont.)

Readings:
RR – *Common Core* – Ch 5-8; Appendix A

March 26th: Desegregation/Integration: School and District Boundaries

Readings:

Additional Readings:
April 2nd: School Accountability Policies and NCLB

Readings:
ED – Politics . Ch. 6-9

Additional Readings:

April 9th: NO CLASS

WORK ON PRESENTATIONS AND POLICY BRIEFS

April 16th: NO CLASS - AERA

WORK ON PRESENTATIONS AND POLICY BRIEFS
April 23rd: School Accountability Policies and NCLB II

**Student Presentations**

Readings:

FH – Research – ch. 3

Excerpts from No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 re: Adequate Yearly Progress and Commentaries/newsclippings related to NCLB – TO BE POSTED

Additional Readings:
Center on Education Policy. (2005). From the capital to the classroom: Year 3 of the No Child Left Behind Act. Washington D.C.: Author. (Read Summary only, pp. v-xiii.)


April 30th: School Accountability Policies and NCLB III

**Student Presentations**

Readings:

NCLB State Waiver Process and Materials – TO BE POSTED

Additional Readings:


**May 7th: The Role of Research in Policy Making**

Readings:
FH – *Research* – Ch. 4-6

**Final Policy Brief due to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.**
Assignments
The main principal behind the course requirements this term is to offer students frequent opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways and to build upon their prior learning to create a stronger, final product.

Attendance and Participation: 25 points

Individual Policy Project
- Proposal: 0 points
- Paper 1: 10 points
- Paper 2: 10 points
- Paper 3: 10 points
- Class Presentation: 15 points
- Final Policy Brief: 30 points

Attendance and Participation: 25 pts.

Due: ongoing

Given the nature of ED 464, it is important that all students participate fully in the course. My expectation is that students will attend each class and be prepared by reading all required readings. (You must notify me in advance by phone or email should you have to miss a class.) In addition, I expect that students will participate fully in classes, particularly during sessions with student presentations and in-class group activities. Participation will be evaluated based on the contribution to the discussion and other students’ learning; it will not be evaluated based on the number or length of comments. Students will be penalized for disruptive comments or behaviors, including instant messaging, texting, checking email, and surfing the internet during class time. If you have difficulty keeping your focus and not doing these other things then do not bring a laptop to class. My expectation is that during every class discussion, during small group work, and when your peers or any guests are presenting you are fully engaged in the discussion and prepared to contribute if called upon.

1. Reading Briefs: As part of your ongoing participation in this course, you are required to prepare a 1-2 page brief each week that emerged from your reading of the required articles/chapters/etc. The weekly briefs will serve as a basis for our class discussions. They should be informal reflections on the readings assigned for that particular week, not summaries of the readings. The brief should have a focus, picking a particular aspect of the reading(s) and reacting to it, but should also demonstrate that you understand the connections across the readings (or raise questions across them if you don’t). While you may incorporate your own experience with the topic, consider these issues at the state or federal level (so issues of scale) as much as possible.

At the end of each brief, you must include at least 2 thoughtful questions for discussion based upon the readings - think of these as questions that would help you and your peers further understand the topic at hand or could help you with a
particular aspect of the policy that you are grappling with (and likely others are too!). These are also really beneficial in providing me with insights into your thinking around these topics. These should be questions that you think you and your classmates could grapple with based upon the readings provided and topics at hand (or linking to previous readings). These should not be questions or clarifications for me or based upon my experience but you are welcome to bring these up as part of class discussion.

These briefs are due no later than 9:00 p.m. every Sunday and should be sent to me through Blackboard as an attachment under the course tools (email). Briefs submitted after the deadline will be recorded as received late. Students may choose not to submit briefs on any three weeks of the term without penalty. However, students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in every session. The briefs will not be graded, but will constitute a major criterion in judging class preparation and participation and in allowing me to gauge students’ understanding of these complex topics. I recommend you cc yourself in the email to be sure it went through. I will let you know when you have used up your 3 free passes.

**Individual Policy Project**
You must write a series of carefully researched paper culminating in a policy brief on a current policy problem that is (or should be) addressed at the state or federal level. You will be focusing on the same topic for all components. You must have my approval regarding topic selection before proceeding (which will occur after you submit your paper proposal). All papers are should be double spaced and following APA formatting.

You must select a **policy problem** for this series of papers and discuss specific policy alternatives that have been implemented or proposed. You will discuss the context and reason this is a policy that should be addressed as part of these assignments and you will also make a recommendation as to the best policy response. You may consider a policy that particularly interests you, e.g., teacher mentoring, public preschool, or zero tolerance, but you must approach this from the policy problem it is trying to address (e.g., teacher quality, school readiness, or school violence).

1. **Paper Proposal (0 pts.)** - You will need to submit a 1 page proposal in which you explain your topic, what level of policy you are addressing, and a very brief discussion about the broader context that makes this policy problem important. After you receive word from me that it is ok to move forward you should start compiling empirical research, newspaper articles, and policy papers or other position papers on this topic. **Due Jan. 30**

2. **Paper 1 (10 pts.)**
In 5-7 pages (7 page max) you should address the following: the policy problem and how it is constructed, the key actors (individuals or organizations) involved in shaping the way the policy problem is understood, and the historical context relating to this problem (i.e., why is it important to address). In this paper you should draw upon the
readings and class discussion relating to the “social construction of policy problems”
to make your arguments.

The purpose of this activity is to enable you to develop the skills necessary to analyze
education policies and programs. A secondary goal is to provide you with feedback
that you can incorporate into your final policy brief. Due Feb. 20 11:59 p.m.

3. Paper 2 (10 pts.)
In 5-7 pages (7 page max) you must discuss 3-5 policy solutions relating to this policy
problem. These must include what the current policy is if one exists. It should also
include past and current policy proposals whether or not they were implemented
(discuss what happened with these and be clear as the chronology of events). You
may include a policy proposal which has not been presented by others but be careful
and very thoughtful about this one to make sure the approach is feasible particularly
at the level you are discussing (in paper 3 make sure you clearly discuss any political,
structural, or economic issues relating to your proposed policy solution. You should
clearly discuss which actors are for/against different policy solutions. In discussing
these policies you should draw upon the readings on “policy instruments.” Due March
12 11:59 p.m.

4. Paper 3 (10 pts.) In 5-7 pages (7 page max) you should address the following: What
are the underlying theories and assumptions of the various policy options you have
discussed in Paper 2? What are (or will likely be) some of the implementation issues?
What do we know about the impact of policies and unintended consequences? You
should draw upon class readings relating to “policy implementation, evaluation and
outcomes” to make your arguments.

The purpose of this activity is to enable you to develop the skills necessary to analyze
policy problems. A secondary goal is to provide you with feedback that you can
incorporate into your final policy brief. Due April 2 11:59 p.m.

Paper Presentation (15 pts) – You will present a policy summary as if you were
presenting to key stakeholders at the state or federal level. Presentations will be 10
minutes. You must use Power Point software to organize your thoughts (no more than
7 slides are allowed) and you must have a 1 page policy summary handout that you
provide to students at the beginning of the class (please submit this to me the Sunday
before class). I will provide additional guidelines. Present April 23, 30.

6. Policy Brief (10 page max not including attachments and bibliography) (30 pts.) -
The final policy brief will incorporate Papers 1, 2, and 3 in a strong synthesis of the
context and policy solutions, and will include your recommendations to state or
federal policy makers. I will provide additional guidelines for this policy brief in class.
Due May 7th 11:59 p.m.
What do we know about the history/context of this problem?
Why is this a problem that needs to be addressed? At what policy level (state/federal) should it be addressed? Why?
Who are the key actors shaping the way the problem is defined?

Paper 2
Discuss some policy solutions
Discuss the key actors advocating particular solutions

Paper 3
Discuss the underlying theory and assumptions of the various policy solutions
Discuss the implementation issues
Discuss the known outcomes or unintended consequences of various policy solutions

Policy Brief
Summarize the construction of the problem, potential solutions, and implementation issues (from papers 1 – 3)
Prioritize policy solutions and make policy recommendations

The following websites and journal/periodicals are recommended as you search for articles, briefs, etc., on your topic of interest.

Websites:
Education Week – www.edweek.org
New York State Department of Education website - http://www.nysed.gov/
ERIC (Education Resource Information Center) - http://www.eric.ed.gov/
Education Commission of the States – www.ecs.org
Council of Chief State School Officers – www.ccsso.org

Academic journals:

Periodicals/Practitioners:
Phi Delta Kappan; Education Week; Educational Leadership.

If you find other useful websites during the course of your policy research, please share them with your colleagues during class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Meetings</th>
<th>Discussion Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session #1</td>
<td>Understanding and Analyzing Educational Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 23rd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #2</td>
<td>The Social Construction of Policy Problems</td>
<td>Begin weekly reading briefs; Paper Proposal Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 30th</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 p.) – bring to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #3</td>
<td>The Social Construction of Policy Problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6th</td>
<td>(cont)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #4</td>
<td>Federal and State Role in Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 13th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #5</td>
<td>Policy Instruments</td>
<td>Paper 1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #6</td>
<td>Policy Implementation, Evaluation, and Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 27th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #7</td>
<td>Policy Implementation, Evaluation, and Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5th</td>
<td>(cont)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #8</td>
<td>Common Core Standards</td>
<td>Paper 2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #9</td>
<td>Common Core Standards (cont)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #10</td>
<td>Desegregation/Integration: School and District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26th</td>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #11</td>
<td>School Accountability Policies and NCLB</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2nd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9th</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16th</td>
<td>AERA – no class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #12</td>
<td>School Accountability Policies and NCLB II</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 23rd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #13</td>
<td>School Accountability Policies and NCLB III</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #14</td>
<td>The Role of Research in Policy Making</td>
<td>Paper due by 11:59 pm on Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>